

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS

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1. A semiconductor integrated circuit,
comprising:

one or more function blocks;

10 a nonvolatile memory unit which stores
therein coded license information; and

15 a decoder circuit which decodes the
license information stored in said nonvolatile
memory unit, and makes one of the function blocks
either usable or unusable depending on the decoded
license information.

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2. The semiconductor integrated circuit as
claimed in claim 1, further comprising a status unit
that has at least part of the decoded license
information stored therein in such a manner as to be
accessible from an exterior of said semiconductor
25 integrated circuit.

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3. The semiconductor integrated circuit as
claimed in claim 1, further comprising a calendar
circuit which indicates a current date and time,
wherein said decoder circuit makes said one of the
function blocks usable in response to a finding that
35 the current date and time indicated by the calendar
circuit is within a valid period indicated by the
decoded license information, and makes said one of

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the function blocks unusable in response to a finding that the current date and time indicated by the calendar circuit is after a valid period indicated by the decoded license information.

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4. The semiconductor integrated circuit as
10 claimed in claim 1, further comprising a counter circuit that counts a number indicative of how many times said one of the function blocks is used, wherein said decoder circuit makes said one of the function blocks usable in response to a finding that
15 the number counted by said counter circuit is within a number of valid use indicated by the decoded license information, and makes said one of the function blocks unusable in response to a finding that the number counted by said counter circuit
20 exceeds the number of valid use indicated by the decoded license information.

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5. The semiconductor integrated circuit as claimed in claim 4, further comprising a license encoder circuit which encodes the number counted by said counter circuit, wherein the number encoded by
30 said license encoder circuit is stored in said nonvolatile memory unit as updated license information.

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6. The semiconductor integrated circuit as

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claimed in claim 1, wherein coding and decoding of
the license information is encrypting and decrypting
that prevent the license information in said
nonvolatile memory unit from being illegally
5 rewritten.

10 7. The semiconductor integrated circuit as
claimed in claim 1, wherein said decoder circuit
includes:

a decoder which decodes the license
information stored in said nonvolatile memory unit;

15 a license register which stores therein
the decoded license information decoded by said
decoder; and

a control circuit which makes said one of
the function blocks either usable or unusable
20 depending on the information stored in said license
register.

25 8. The semiconductor integrated circuit as
claimed in claim 7, wherein said control circuit
controls a chip enable signal of said one of the
function blocks in order to make said one of the
30 function blocks either usable or unusable.

35 9. The semiconductor integrated circuit as
claimed in claim 7, wherein said control circuit
controls a clock signal of said one of the function

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blocks in order to make said one of the function blocks either usable or unusable.

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10. The semiconductor integrated circuit as claimed in claim 1, wherein said nonvolatile memory unit receives the coded license information from an external LSI tester, and no external pin is provided for a purpose of receiving the coded license information.

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